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March 3, 2006 10:00 A.M.

**STATEMENT BY FRIENDS OF THE APOSTLE ISLANDS NATIONAL LAKESHORE
CHAIRPERSON RUTH GOETZ**

SUBJECT: APOSTLE ISLANDS VOLUNTARY PASSPORT

Thanks, Bob. I am very pleased to announce a new initiative that the Friends of the Apostle Islands are undertaking in close cooperation with the National Park Service. Our mission as an organization is *to promote an appreciation for and preservation of the cultural and natural heritage and the natural environment of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore*. In just two years of existence, the Friends have committed to the park almost \$50,000 in grants, which have been, or will soon be, used to:

- Maintain historic structures
- Conduct historical research
- Put a ranger at Meyers Beach to provide safety information to park visitors
- Re-establish the park's summer lecture series
- Print the park newspaper
- Install interpretive signs on the mainland and several islands
- Sponsor the wilderness celebration at the Big Top last year
- Support volunteerism and volunteer projects in the park

In addition, the Friends published *Jewels on the Water*, which came out last fall, the first-ever book of its kind celebrating these majestic island and our home-town national park.

Friends now have well over 200 members and yet we have never done a membership drive. The love for the park is evident in this community and the Friends hope to tap that energy in support of the park, which needs the help of people who care in order to survive.

We believe that people are looking for a simple way to demonstrate they support the park, and we now have a way for them to do just that. Starting in 2006, park supporters will be able to purchase a Voluntary Apostle Islands Passport for a donation of \$30 or more to the Friends. The passports will take the form of an attractive sticker – there's a sample in your packet -- which will vary in color and design each year. Stickers will have the year prominently displayed; we hope people will want to buy a passport every year.

A complementary Friends membership comes with each passport, and all Friends members will get a complementary passport.

Boaters will be encouraged to display their passports on the stern of their boats, in the upper right corner. Others will be encouraged to put them on the right rear bumper of their cars or trucks. We think these will become collectors' items, and park visitors will want to show them to demonstrate that they are part of the solution to the park's funding challenges.

Purchases of the *voluntary passports* should be tax-deductible, and we'll work with the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce and others to make them widely available in the community and to park users through cooperating local businesses.

Except for a very small handling fee for the merchants who sell them – if they ask for it, and some have already told us they won't – 100% of the monies collected for the passports will go into an account that will be dedicated to the park's priorities for projects for maintenance, visitor services, and protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of the Apostle Islands.

Very importantly, with the encouragement of the National Park Service, we will dedicate all monies raised through the program in 2006 to the furnishing and exhibits at the historic Raspberry Island Light Station, which is currently being rehabilitated by the NPS and expected to re-open in its 1930s-era glory in 2007.

The Friends of the Apostle Islands are proud to be a partner with the National Park Service and we think that the *Voluntary Passport* program will be a big hit.

Thank you, and Bob and I would be happy to answer any questions.